

the conditions now actually existing and on the trend of political theory and practice during the present century. The accepted principle that the burdens of life must be lifted from the shoulders of the inefficient and placed on those of the efficient, seems to be incurably dysgenic; and this loading of the dice against the Survival of the Fittest appears to command universal approval.

But neither view admits of demonstrative proof; and, really, the question is, in connection with my proposal, of only academic interest. Dr. Dunlop will surely agree with me that a League of persons associated with the conscious purpose of safeguarding the interests of their children and more remote posterity (a League which might, in time, come to include a large part of the population) would be a valuable institution, whatever the political conditions of the future might be.

R. AUSTIN FREEMAN.

that there should be an equal chance for all to succeed, so that we might have the best possible chance of finding inherited talent which is now submerged by lack of opportunity. When we have found it, we should devise means of encouraging its reproduction. We should be quite uninterested in inherited titles, for if the character which has earned the title is really inherited, then the offspring should obviously earn the title for himself without having it forced upon him!

With regard to J. Banister's letter, I should have no hesitation in resigning from the *Society* rather than remain in it with him, were it not that I want to continue to support the splendid work that the *Society* is doing in pressing for the legalization of Eugenic sterilization.

Yours faithfully,

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Eugenics and Snobbery

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—I object strongly to the letters from A. M. Ludovici and J. Banister in the October number of *THE EUGENICS REVIEW*. The former was favourably commented upon in your editorial columns.

The attitude of A. M. Ludovici is that of a cow which attacks a wounded member of the herd simply because it is wounded. That attitude may be excusable in a cow, but it is objectionable in a human being. There can be no doubt that many people have been attracted to Eugenics for no better reason than that they are anti-humanitarians or snobs. Their presence in the *Society* and the expression of their views in its journal are sufficient to keep many desirable people out of the *Society*. Will you allow me to put forward a humanitarian, anti-snobish view of what Eugenics should be?

Firstly, humanitarians should be attracted to Eugenics because of the enormous reduction in the amount of suffering which would result from its proper application. The life of people with serious inherited defects is one long misery. It would be humane to prevent them from being born. But when they have been born, then we, as Eugenists, should be particularly careful to see that they are properly and humanely looked after, because we realize more clearly than others that their mental or other defect is not in the smallest degree their own fault. We should prevent them from reproducing, but we should study their welfare.

Secondly, we should be the last people in the world to be snobs. We should try to arrange

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—Dr. J. R. Baker seems quite unconscious of the fact that he is under the sway of popular values and does not even suspect that these popular values are not absolute values. This makes it very difficult to put him right. That is why, as I have said again and again, long before I had any concrete evidence of the Dr. Bakers of this world, I do not belong to your *Society*. But this does not make me call Dr. Baker a "snob" or a "cow." I am much too scientific. The object one chooses for one's pity is determined by the values to which one's taste has directed one. I personally choose for my pity the steadily dwindling number of the hale and the sound. It is on them that the future depends. It is their existence that is threatened by the increasing hordes of the bungled and botched, and by the sacrifices they are called upon to make for the latter. Dr. Baker's values, however, like those of millions of English people to-day, make him ready to sacrifice the sound and hale for the unsound, the greater for the less. The difference between him and me is that I long ago renounced his values, and that he has never even heard of mine. I approve of the farmer who, on seeing his precious crops choked by dodder pities the precious crops. Dr. Baker would have him pity the dodder.

If Dr. Baker had been scientific, he would have seen all this. He would also have seen that all I suggested was that the bungled and botched might be made to share with the sound the sacrifice now being demanded of the nation. In a culture ruled by different values from those Dr. Baker unconsciously follows, it would not

have seemed anti-humanitarian to suggest something very much more drastic. But I refrained.

Dr. Baker then treats us to a full-throated and sentimental harangue on what eugenists should believe. There may be innumerable views about that, and Dr. Baker has no more authority than anyone else to be dogmatic. The only possible reason why he is so absurdly dogmatic is that he fondly imagines that his degenerate values are absolute values. Their taint is obvious when he asserts that the defect of the botched "is not in the smallest degree their own fault"! How tiresome parrots are! Every muddle-headed spinster flings this at me whenever I address an audience on eugenics. As if it mattered whose fault it was! Who can help being anything? Do we say to the sheep, "Ah, poor sheep, we shan't send you to the butcher because it's not your fault you're a sheep, we'll put you on the hearth-rug and treat you as a fox-terrier." Did we say to the young men of 1914, "Ah, poor boys, it's not your fault you're males eligible for the front line, to stand between us and the German fire. Therefore you shan't go! No, we shan't let you go!" According to Dr. Baker's very plausible code of values, we should spare people the consequences of being what they can't help. Truth to tell, we should forgive nobody for what they can't help, and as a matter of fact we rarely do. Only the modern and sentimental world, including the J. R. Bakers in its midst, makes an exception in favour of degenerates. Personally, I don't even forgive Dr. Baker his letter, although I feel sure that he can't help it!

ANTHONY M. LUDOVICI.

NOTE.—Beyond the necessary safeguards against libel, excessive length, etc., we exercise no control over the letters in our correspondence columns and accept no responsibility for the opinions expressed therein. On the contrary, we welcome and automatically print any letters relevant to eugenics.—ED.

Eugenics and Socialism

To the Editor, *Eugenics Review*

SIR,—It is my belief that Eugenics will do as much to facilitate human progress and lessen suffering as any other reformist movement. Moreover, the advancement of the science depends greatly, in fact almost solely, on the actions of the *Eugenics Society*.

That the *Society* is taking the wrong road is my criticism which will not, I hope, appear impertinent—it is sincerely intended. We must realize that the great majority of reformers (whether mistaken or not) are socialists, and it seems to me that they are being definitely antagonized by the policy of the *Society* and by some careless mis-statements. Fellows and Members must emphasize the fact that Eugenics

is as necessary in the Socialist, as in the Capitalist State, and show how Russia is actively pursuing a eugenic policy to-day.

Eugenics recognizes class differences, but the classes are of ability, not of wealth! The talented, aristocratic members of the *Society* seem to confuse these distinctions, and also would deny the slightest influence of environment just as some people refuse to consider hereditary causes. *Lack of capital does not denote lack of mental and physical qualities.* Unless we remember this fact unlimited opposition will be provoked, possibly dishonouring the Cause.

I agree with the strongest critics of the differential birth rate, but would point out that this may be remedied, not aggravated, by improving the conditions of the depressed. (This, of course, does not mean that contraception propaganda should be slackened.)

Again, what has the *Society* achieved? Apart from the publication of a really excellent *REVIEW* it has done little. During the past year all its attention was paid to the Sterilization Bill which unfortunately proved a failure. I suggest immediate and progressive action to include the following:

1. Questionnaires to be issued to municipal and parliamentary candidates.
2. Support for sterilization operations as advised by Mr. Havelock Ellis.
3. Increased propaganda through the mediums of the cinema, radio and Press.
4. A drive for increased membership.
5. Some scheme for introducing birth control to slum families.

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Eugenics Negative and Positive

To the Editor, *Eugenics Review*

SIR,—Is it possible that rather too much is being said about the negative aspects of eugenics. Are the 1 per cent. mental defectives too much with us in our thoughts? My own actual experience is very narrow, but many years ago when I visited the homes of a number of M.D. boys a striking thing was that many of these cases were sporadic, the weak-minded child was unlike his more vigorous parents.

Even then—twenty years ago—there was an unproved suspicion that some of these "sporadic" cases might be abortive attempts at abortion, attempts at miscarriage that had miscarried, leaving the poor child indeed alive but addle-headed. To-day there is almost an increased risk that attempts to avoid the possibility of incompetent children—by way of abortion—may only increase their numbers.